

For good reason, most Americans believe that our schools are not doing enough to prepare kids for the difficult challenges that lie ahead.

Educational quality and privacy concerns come together when private companies seek out the hotly contested youth market. Kids aged 4 to 12 directly spent more than \$24 billion and influenced their parents to spend \$187 billion in 1997, according to a Texas A&M study.

The classroom is fast becoming a preferred site to learn about student purchasing preferences because, "That's where the kids are," says Alex Molnar, director of the Center for Analysis of Commercialism in Education at the University of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

According to the promotional literature for ZapMe! Corporation, a company that offers free computers to schools, "Children in grades K-12 are arguably the toughest audience for marketers to reach and quite possibly the most valuable . . . Pinpoint targeting of such an elusive audience is made possible via the most revolutionary educational medium in the world, the ZapMe! Knowledge Network." James Twitchell, author of *ADCULT USA*, for advertisers, said that when it comes to kids in schools, "It doesn't get any better. These people have not bought cars. They have not chosen the kind of toothpaste they will use. This audience is Valhalla. It's the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow."

Students should go to school to learn, not to provide companies an edge in a hot market. But increasing numbers of companies are targeting schools as the best place to learn the purchasing preferences of young people. Unfortunately, they can do this today without the permission of parents, and sometimes without the knowledge of the students themselves.

Parents have a right to know how their children are spending their days at school. If parents do not want their children to be objects of market research firms while in school, they should have the right to say no. My bill gives parents that right.

By requiring parental consent for a student to contribute to any market research in school, students and parents will be able to retain more control over how the school day is spent and will be able to make an informed decision as to whether to reveal personal information that private companies otherwise might not be able to obtain.

Existing school privacy laws only protect official records and research funded by the Federal Department of Education. Current law leaves a loophole for companies to go into classrooms to get information directly from kids without parental consent. This information is then sold to advertisers and marketers, who use it to target students.

Consider these examples of the growing trend of using the classroom to solicit personal information from kids for market research:

Kids in a New Jersey elementary school filled out a 27-page booklet called "My All About Me Journal" as part of a marketing survey for a cable television channel.

Elementary school students in Kansas answered marketing questions over the school computer.

Students in a Massachusetts elementary school spent two days tasting cereal and answering an opinion poll.

The ZapMe! Corporation provides schools with free computers but then monitors students' web browsing habits, breaking the data down by age, sex and ZIP code.

Students in Honolulu schools divulge extensive buying habit information to the private company that runs its SmartCard system. The cards are used as student IDs as well as a means to purchase school supplies, concession stand items and school lunches. Promotional arrangements are also linked to the card.

It is clear that companies have a powerful incentive to go into class to solicit information from kids. My legislation will ensure that parents retain the ultimate authority to determine if they want their kids to participate in this type of activity at school and thereby help protect the parent-child relationship.

By raising the issue of commercialism in the classroom, my goal is not to usurp local decision-making by schools, but rather to protect parents and students and encourage an informed discussion of all of the costs and benefits of these arrangements.

#### NORTH CAROLINA HURRICANE FLOYD DISASTER RECOVERY

##### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 22, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the courage and tenacity of the citizens of my birthplace, the great State of North Carolina. They have endured, over the last few days, one of our Nation's worse natural disasters: Hurricane Floyd. I also want to lend my support to their recovery efforts.

As fellow Brooklynite Jackie Robinson once resonated, "a life means nothing except for the impact it has on others." At this moment, we must all reach out and lend a helping hand to North Carolina.

Although the impact of Hurricane Floyd was felt from the Bahamas to New England, North Carolina has shouldered the brunt of the storm. Governor Jim Hunt of North Carolina reported that at least 10,000 people are in shelters, an estimated 1,500 people are still stranded, and that preliminary property damage figures may exceed \$1.3 billion. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has predicted that this could be the most challenging recovery effort in the organization's history. Unfortunately, it has become painfully clear that Hurricane Floyd, combined with Hurricane Dennis, is shaping up to be the worst disaster North Carolina has ever witnessed.

So today I rise to say that this is not just a North Carolina problem; this is a national problem. We must all work together to ensure that the citizens of the great Tar Heel state fully recover from this unforgettable event.

That is why I will join with Congresswoman EVA CLAYTON of North Carolina and other members of Congress to send a legislative package that will provide further relief to the Hurricane survivors. I have also called North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt's office, which recently organized the N.C. Hurricane Floyd Relief Fund, to determine what other immediate

assistance is needed. As we speak, thousands of people urgently need bottled water, non-perishable foods, clothing and bedding. For those who want to lend a helping hand, the donation hotline number is 1-888-786-7601.

Mr. Speaker, let us all take a moment out of our busy lives to remember North Carolina. To the citizens of North Carolina, I want you to know that you have my unwavering support. May God bless you.

#### MIDDLESEX COUNTY AMERICAN HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATS' 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE

##### HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 22, 1999*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, September 26th, the Middlesex County, NJ, American Hungarian Democratic Organization will be holding its twenty-fifth Silver Anniversary Dinner Dance at the Victorian Manor in Edison, NJ. I am proud to pay tribute to this exciting event and the great organization behind it.

The highlights of the event will include the presentation of the Anthony M. Yelencsis Memorial Citizen Award to Steve J. Yelencsis, brother of former Mayor Anthony M. Yelencsis of Edison, the founder of the Middlesex County American Hungarian Democratic Organization. The award will be presented by Anton Yelencsis, Tony's son.

The Anthony M. Yelencsis Memorial Scholarship Award is presented to high school graduates of Hungarian lineage who exhibit excellent scholastic achievements and other distinguished activities and service during their school years. This year, the award will be presented to Valentine S. Tarr by his uncle, Steven Tarr, the Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee.

In addition, the Distinguished Service Awards will be presented to Helen R. Gottlieb, Middlesex County and Edison Democratic Vice-Chairwoman by Dr. Thomas H. Paterniti, Edison Chairman, and to Edison Councilman William A. Kruczak by Edison Councilman Peter J. Barnes III for their contributions to the community and to the organization.

Mr. Speaker, the Hungarian-American community in Middlesex County is one of the largest in the Nation. The members of this community continue to make their mark on the community in numerous ways. When Hungarians left their homeland for the promise of America, particularly in response to the imposition of Communist tyranny, Middlesex County was one of the major areas that provided a home and a sense of hope for the future. The Hungarian immigrants and their sons and daughters, in turn, have contributed mightily to the growth and development of Central Jersey through their hard work and commitment to family and community.

While Hungarian-Americans have become an integral part of the larger American community, thoughts about the great Magyar motherland are still in their hearts and minds.